VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

OCTOBER 2002 TWO DOLLARS

Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

The early special archery deer season is just about ready to open. The early special muzzle-loading deer season east of the Blue Ridge is only about a month away. And the traditional "Third Monday" in November for the opening of the general firearms deer season is quickly approaching. Now more than at other times of the year, we at the Department quickly realize just how important our white-tailed deer herd is to countless numbers of Virginians and also to thousands of visitors to the Commonwealth. To many, deer are important for hunting and for food. To others, deer are important for just watching. But regardless of the reasons, it is this level of importance that has us keeping a watchful eye on a wildlife disease known as chronic wasting disease (CWD).

CWD affects the brain of deer and elk and is transmitted between these two animals. It has no known cure, is generally fatal, and there is no live test for the disease. The incubation period for CWD is a source of significant concern. Experts acknowledge that an animal could test negative and still have the disease for a period of up to one and one-half years, and they are concerned that the incubation period may be as long as five years. CWD is very similar to mad cow disease, which has been of great concern to agricultural interests. While there is no definitive evidence that mad cow disease and CWD are transmitted between wildlife and livestock, the fact that these diseases are so similar raises concern about the possibility of disease transmission.

While CWD has been an issue for some time, the attention that the stocking of elk has received around the country has substantially raised the Department's concern. CWD has been documented in relocated elk from western states in both Canada and the United States, and has lead many states to ban the export and/or import of deer or elk. Of major concern is that CWD can be passed between captive and wild, free-ranging cervids (members of the deer family). In Virginia, we are currently taking the necessary steps to declare a moratorium on the interstate movement of cervids.

In states that have experienced a CWD outbreak, it has been necessary to eliminate all deer and elk within an area where the disease could be transmitted. Currently, Wisconsin is undergoing the eradication of up to 15,000 deer and elk within a 287-square mile area because of a CWD outbreak. Such an action has significant impacts on the state's economy, not only with hunting license sales, but also with the goods and services purchased by hunters and wildlife watchers. In addition, the cost of eradicating deer and elk in the outbreak and exposure area can run in the millions of dollars.

There is no evidence that CWD exists in Virginia, and the importance of our white-tailed deer is such that we must do all we can to keep it that way. Department biologists will continue to monitor what other states are doing in this area and are implementing a sound monitoring program to ensure that Virginia remains disease free.

If you are planning a hunting trip in another state, you are encouraged to get in touch with the wildlife officials in that state for any special procedures or protocols they may have regarding CWD.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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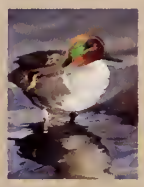

About the cover: The green-winged teal *(Anas crecca)* is a small dabbling duck that is found throughout Virginia. It is distinguished by a green eye patch that extends to the fluffy nape and green patch seen on its wings when in flight. Photo©Jack Mills.

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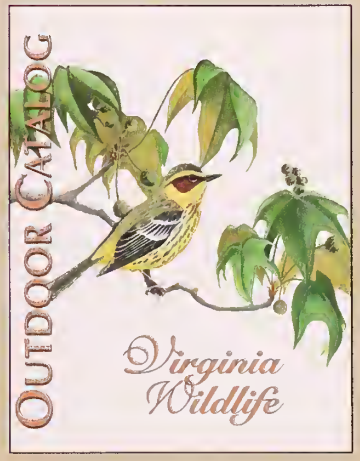

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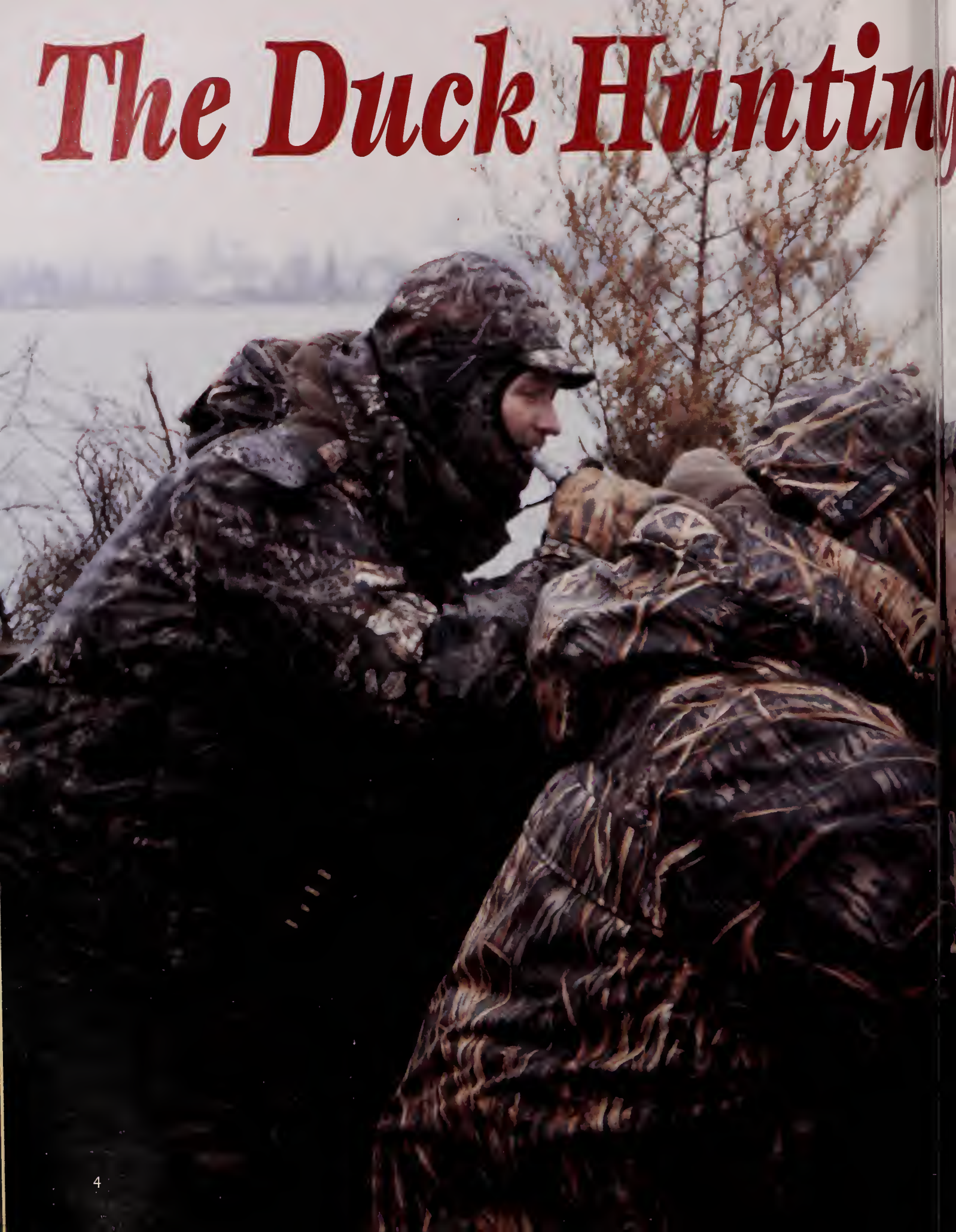
The Duck Huntin



g Kubalas

For one Virginia family, waterfowl hunting is a lot more than it's "quacked" up to be.

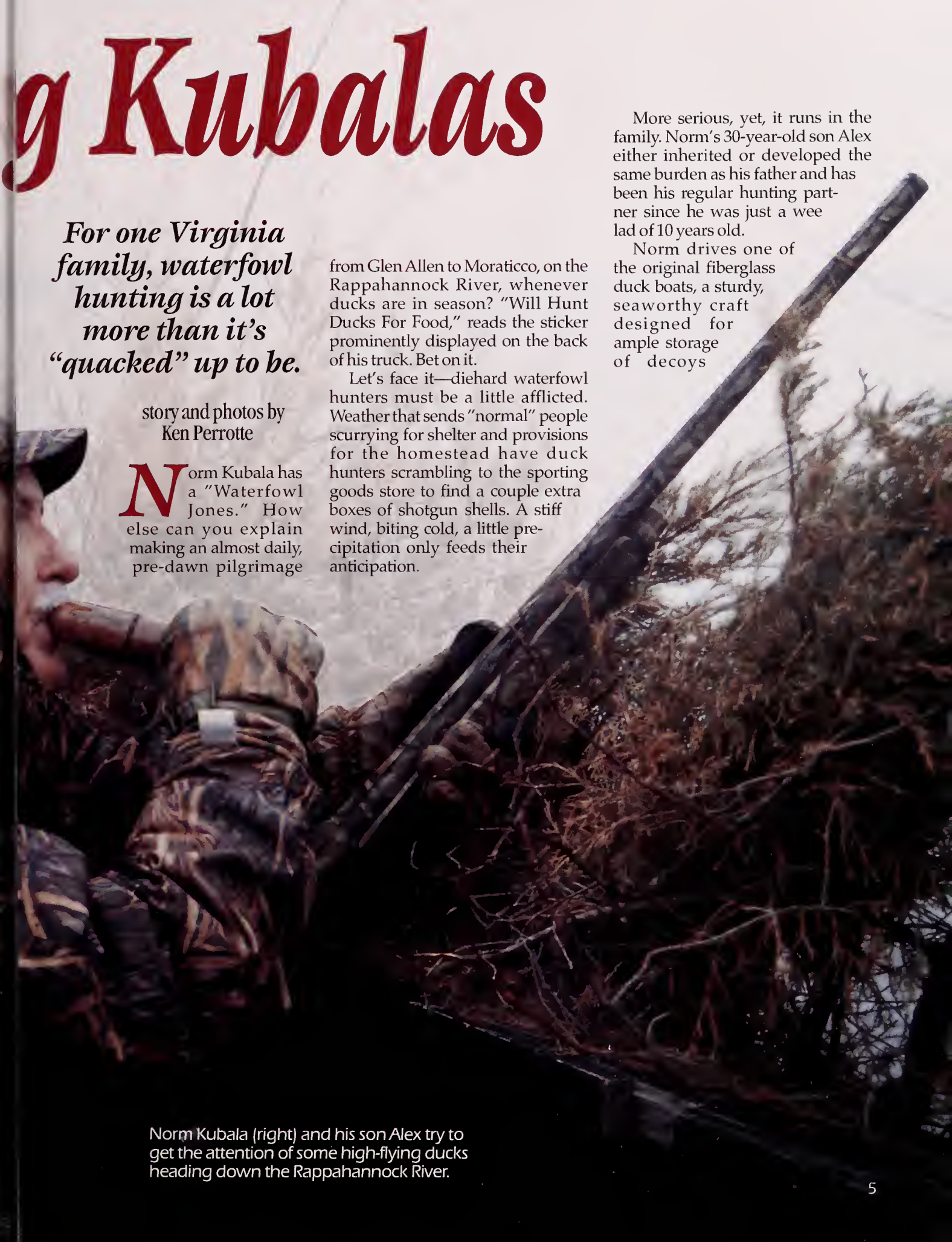
story and photos by
Ken Perrotte

Norm Kubala has a "Waterfowl Jones." How else can you explain making an almost daily, pre-dawn pilgrimage from Glen Allen to Moraticco, on the Rappahannock River, whenever ducks are in season? "Will Hunt Ducks For Food," reads the sticker prominently displayed on the back of his truck. Bet on it.

Let's face it—diehard waterfowl hunters must be a little afflicted. Weather that sends "normal" people scurrying for shelter and provisions for the homestead have duck hunters scrambling to the sporting goods store to find a couple extra boxes of shotgun shells. A stiff wind, biting cold, a little precipitation only feeds their anticipation.

More serious, yet, it runs in the family. Norm's 30-year-old son Alex either inherited or developed the same burden as his father and has been his regular hunting partner since he was just a wee lad of 10 years old.

Norm drives one of the original fiberglass duck boats, a sturdy, seaworthy craft designed for ample storage of decoys



Norm Kubala (right) and his son Alex try to get the attention of some high-flying ducks heading down the Rappahannock River.

Sleet stinging his face, Norm Kubala navigates his boat back to the dock following a day of duck hunting. Below: Gunner, the Kubala's Chesapeake Bay retriever nears the blind with a downed duck.

and guns. Hand on the tiller, his hunting hat pulled down over his ears and chin to ward off the weather, salt and pepper hair and mustache framing a wind-tanned face, Kubala looks like a duck hunter from central casting.

He grew up in upstate New York, but moved to Virginia 27 years ago. He now runs Data Graphics, a printing company. Being his own boss suits his passion, giving him the flexibility to work his schedule around duck and goose hunting. Alex is a sales manager for a corrugated box company.

Besides putting in their time on the Rappahannock, the Kubalas try to make an annual road trip to one of the duck meccas in the Central or Mississippi Flyway each year. Arkansas and North Dakota have been recent favorites.

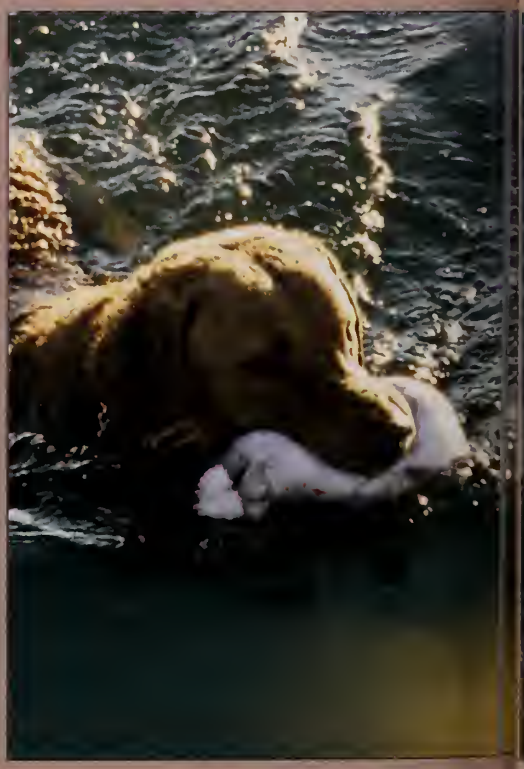
How're we lookin'?

"How're we lookin'?" Norm yells up into the blind to Richmond police officer Ed Lilly after taking a stroll in his chest waders to re-position some of the decoys. The spread on this last day of the 2001 season featured two large groups of bluebills (lesser scaup), a couple groups of five-to-seven buffleheads, and a pair of goldeneyes.

Sitting in the water to the rear of the blind, just in case, are a few mallard and Canada geese floaters.

Kubala's decoys are top rate, foam floaters that are well painted and self-righting.

For the last decade, the Kubalas have maintained a few blinds on the Rappahannock down near Mulber-



ry Creek, around Belle Isle State Park. They do a little guiding, mostly to cover the expenses of building the spacious blinds and keeping them sound against the rigors of the river. Howling wind, large waves, or moving floes of ice all have a way of reducing a blind to so much waterway debris. Plus, the guide fare helps keep them in steel shot.

Norm likes the area where his blinds are situated; saying it hasn't changed much over the years. It's a throwback to an earlier time, when the Northern Neck was rugged and raw, attracting watermen who were self-reliant, independent spirits.

Norm believes there are more ducks now. "You never saw big rafts of bluebills like we're seeing in the last couple years," he said.

When conditions are right, with inland ponds and creeks frozen, the Kubalas can score everything from puddle ducks to their usual staple of diving ducks, including the desirable canvasback.

"The weather killed us this year (2001-2002)," Alex said, cradling his 12-gauge shotgun, chambered for 3.5-inch shells. "The hunting here is so weather dependent. The birds coming here first stage around the Potomac. We need the weather to get them moving.

"Hunting is usually best late in the season, but this year it was better early on when boats on the river and in the creeks got the ducks up and moving," he added.

Shots echoed across the expanse of big water from the blind hiding longtime gunning buddies Nelson Wright and 73-year-old Gordon Taylor. Clambering through the trap door at the rear of the blind, Norm immediately gets on the handheld radio. "Who's shooting?"

Wright comes on the horn, announcing they've taken one duck, but should have had more. Norm playfully chides the hunters on their shooting prowess.

"I like these gray-on-gray days," Norm said. "A good chop on the water. The ducks are usually flying."

The "good" weather, though, is a little slow in arriving. The hunters had hoped to see it windy and spitting precipitation at daybreak. The only one in the blind, though, that appears particularly anxious is Gunner, Norm's three-year-old Chesapeake retriever, 100 pounds of deadgrass colored, air breathing, duck fetching machine.

Alex Kubala heads back to the dock with a boatload of decoys following a morning of duck hunting.

"He is usually as calm as a cucumber and just whines if he sees ducks coming," Alex explained, "but if they're heading in he goes statue, sitting rock still. Half the fun of being out here is watching this dog work"

"Good dog," Alex yells as Gunner retrieves a duck, swimming powerfully against the incoming tide.

"He's no fancy dog; he's a meat dog," added Norm. "We hope to find him a girlfriend this year—get a puppy."

The shooting remains sporadic throughout the morning. Norm coaches a youth basketball team and we have to bail from the blind before noon. The kids will be waiting and likely won't understand the coach's powerful urges to hang in to the last minute waiting for a duck to meet its destiny.

It figures that the weather finally turns ducky with increasing winds and a touch of stinging sleet just about time to pick up the decoys.

The advancing storm prompts Norm to recollect other sporty

Alex Kubala praises Gunner for retrieving a downed duck.

Norm Kubala (center) shows his young hunting partner Matthew Perry one of the ducks taken during the morning, while Alex and Gunner look on. Below: The Kubala's Chesapeake Bay retriever Gunner reluctantly leaves the comfort of their duck blind after a great day of waterfowl hunting.

weather adventures. "I've seen snow and ice built up 15 feet high around our offshore blind," he said. "The water can freeze across at this point in the river. When that ice decides to break apart and start moving, well, I've seen blinds cut to shreds."

The Kubala's blinds are built in areas where the river is wide and the right weather conditions can make situations downright treacherous.

"There was one time when huge whitecaps were battering our blind. The wind was screaming. We had to take the boat away from the blind and anchor it," Norm remembered. "It didn't take much longer before we realized it wasn't safe to remain and we had to get out of there. There was no pulling in the anchor. We had to cut the rope to free the boat or else it would've swamped. It was a hairy trip getting off the water that day."

Ever the Gracious Host

Even with the clock ticking on getting off the water and to the ball game, Norm insists that Ed and I move to the big water blind, while he graciously retrieves the decoys. We collected three birds almost immediately with a couple other opportunities missed due to birds streaking by from the rear of the blind.

Twenty minutes later, we watch Norm hunker against the wind and slide the duck boat into the spread of dekes. It's time to call it a season.

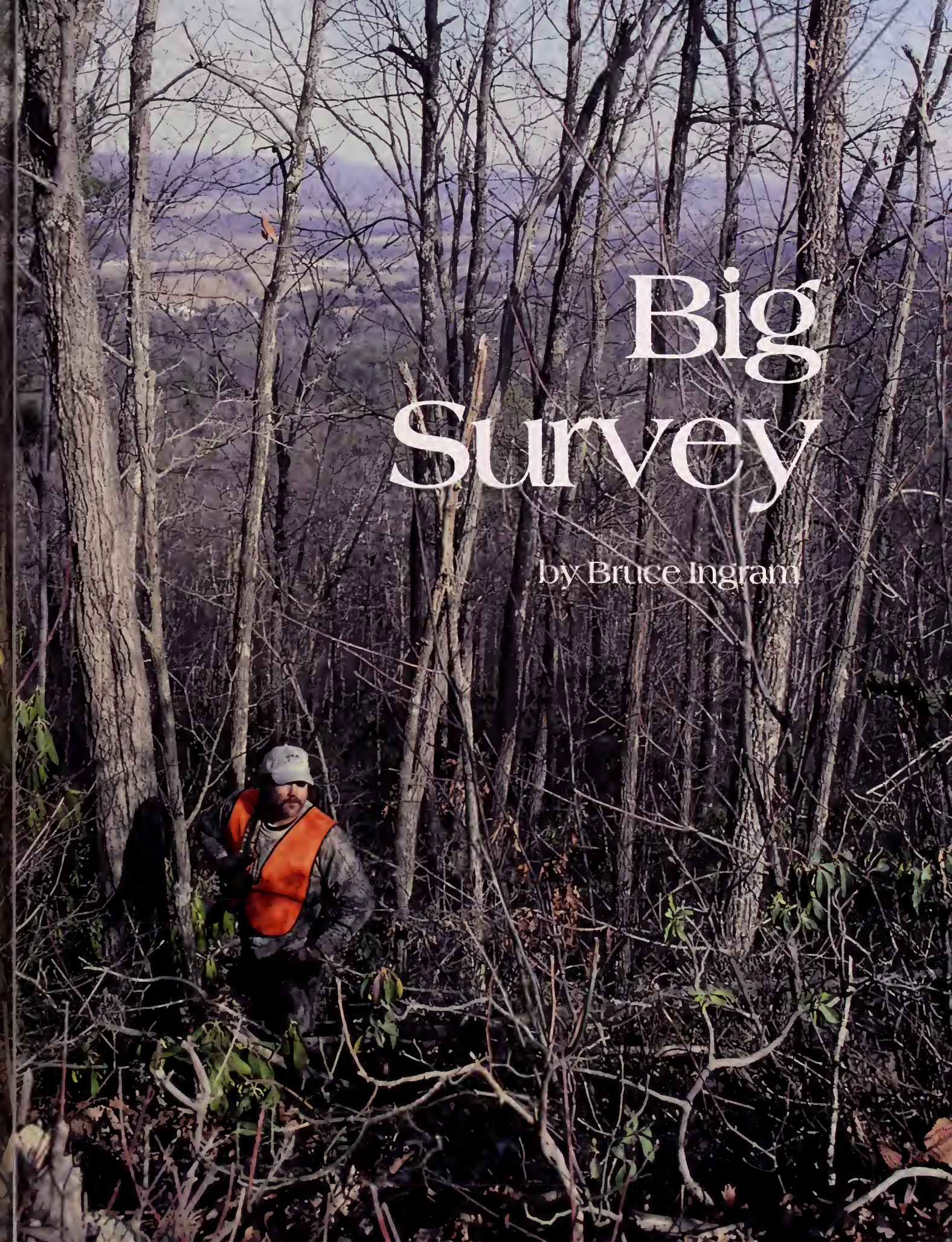
Earlier, Alex had professed that he thought his dad liked motoring around in the duck boat as much as shouldering his shotgun. Yeah, that definitely seems possible.

With nary the first shot fired from his 12-gauge shotgun, Norm leaned forward. Clasping his hands, he gazed out over the water, declaring, "I just love it out here—love it!" ☐

Ken Perrotte is a writer and outdoor columnist for the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star, *who lives in King George, Virginia*

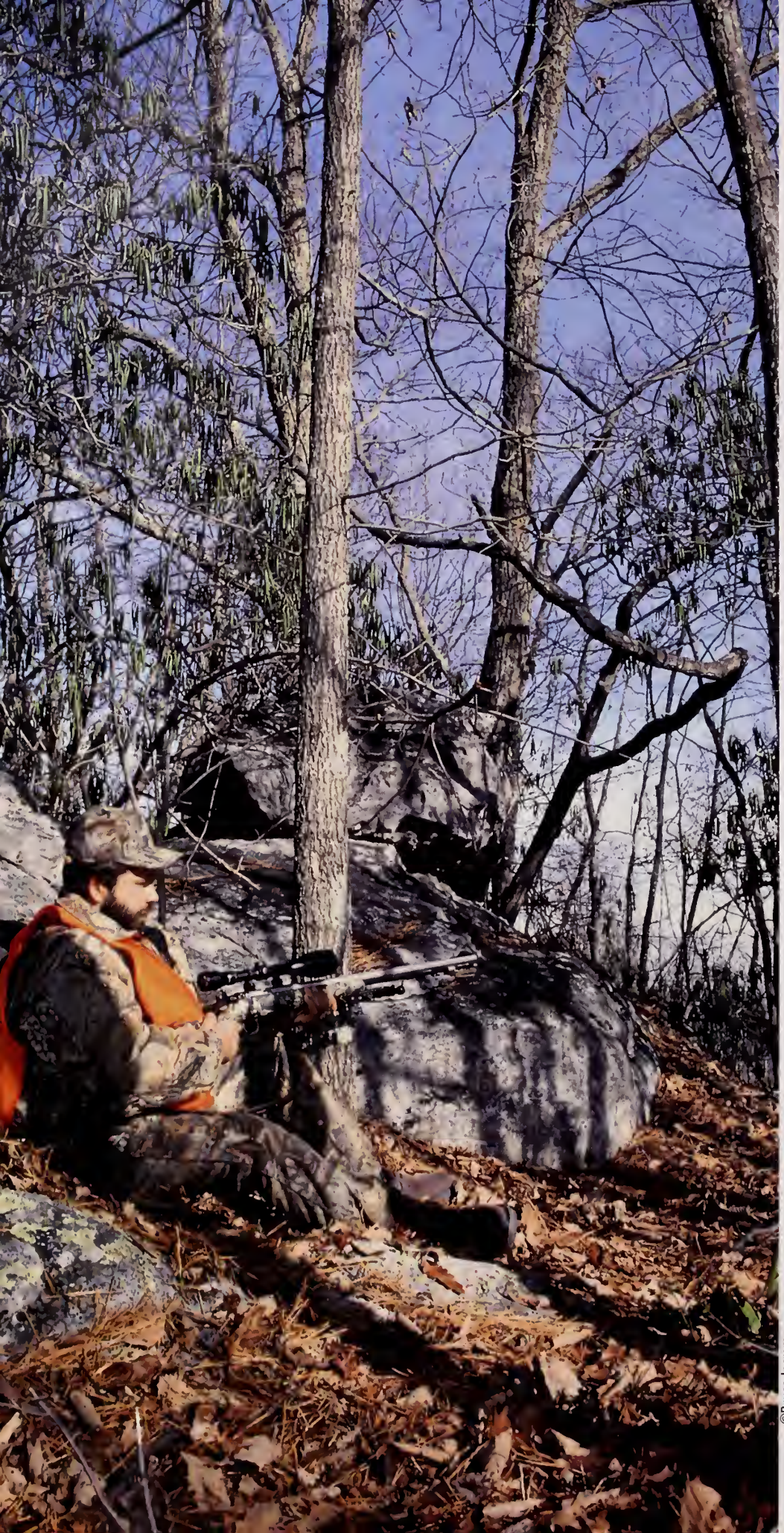
Waterfowl Hunting Information

- To learn more about waterfowl hunting in Virginia or to obtain a copy of the Virginia Waterfowl Hunting Regulations call (804) 367-9369 or go on-line at www.dgif.state.va.us.
- The Kubalas can be reached at 804-798-7200.



Big Survey

by Bruce Ingram



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Virginia's newest wildlife management area offers outdoor enthusiasts a mountain of opportunities.

In the classic film *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlet O'Hara finally comes to understand that her late father's words are—and will always be—true: "land is the only thing that matters." Last October 18, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) saw to it that all those who think land matters—anglers, hunters, birdwatchers, hikers, and outdoor lovers of all persuasions—would have a little piece of paradise protected for eternity.

That's when VDGIF officially dedicated the Big Survey Wildlife Management Area (WMA) as the newest addition—and the first in some two decades—to the 33 WMAs owned by the Department.

The history of Big Survey began with a land grant of more than 10,000 acres in 1897. Over the years, members of the Shaffer, Huddle, Wohlford, and Trinkle families predominantly held the title to the land. The land has remained almost completely in its natural state with the exception of some mining activities for sand and gravel, and very limited construction. It is truely representative of a wilderness.

VDGIF purchased the 8,300 acres that constitute Big Survey for $3 million; that money came from a Treasury loan approved by the Virginia General Assembly. VDGIF will

repay the loan using funds received from fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation.

Credit should go to a number of individuals and organizations who assisted greatly in making the creation of Big Survey a reality. Bipartisan support in the General Assembly was crucial as Democrat Vic Thomas led the effort in the House of Delegates and Republican Bo Trumbo shepherded the process through the Senate.

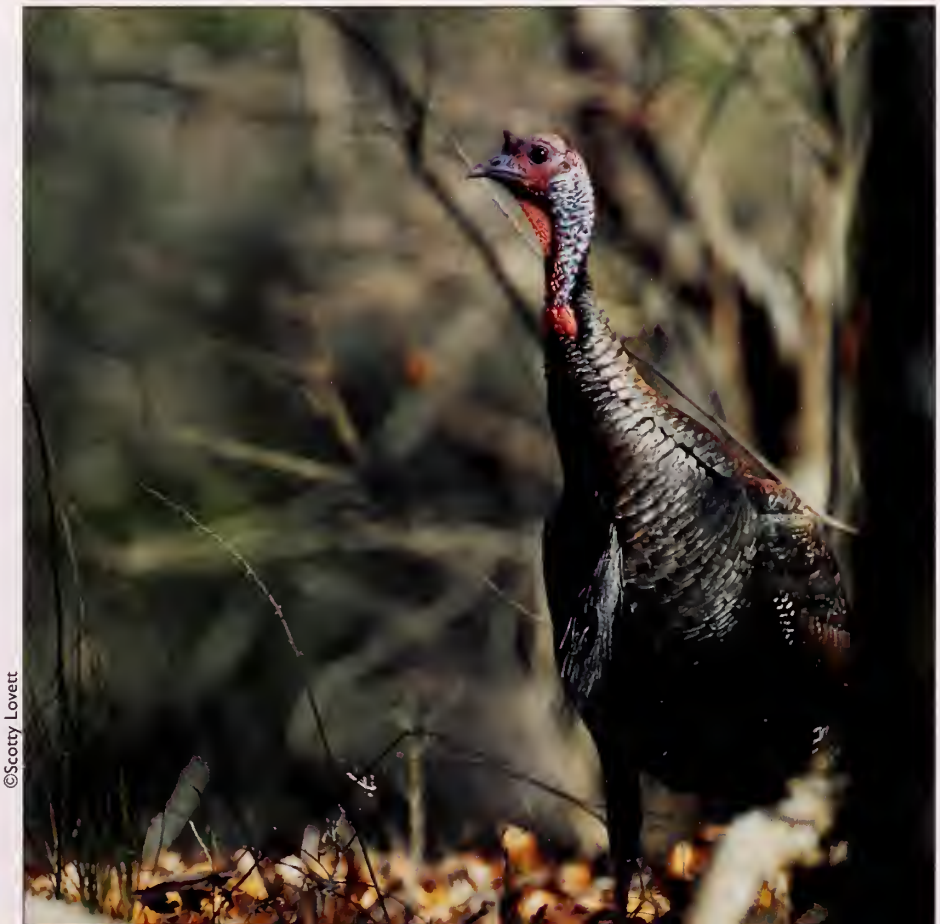
Also key were the efforts of the Western Virginia Land Trust (WVLT). According to Tamara Vance, executive director of the Virginia Outdoor Foundation (VOF), credits should go to several people.

"Liza Field of Wytheville was the ringleader for this project and she deserves a great deal of the credit," says Vance. "It was all her perseverance and faith that kept the idea and possibility going. She was optimistic and so full of energy."

"The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) did a limited survey and found rare species worth protecting: least weasel, rare moths, dragonflies, and northern long-eared bats," recalls Vance. "They also found rare communities: boggy seeps, scrubby oak-pine forests, acid-cove forests, and dry acidic ridgetops, but no specific plants at the time they surveyed. Also, just the size of Big Survey made the land very special.

The final action needed for the VDGIF to become the heir of this expansive 8,300-acre tract followed more than six years of citizen and landowner interest and the final execution of an agreement by the landowners to sell the land for conservation purposes.

©Bill Lea



©Scotty Lovett

Located near Wytheville, Big Survey Wildlife Management Area's remote location and diverse habitat make it a haven for animals like black bear, wild turkey, and white-tailed deer. Opposite page: While deer hunting, the author takes advantage of a panoramic mountaintop overlook, covered with huge boulders and rhododendron.

Rick Busch, assistant wildlife division director for VDGIF, says that outdoors enthusiasts will likely enjoy a sojourn at Big Survey.

"The purchase will provide significant wildlife and outdoor-oriented recreational opportunities for the citizens of Virginia" he says. "Hunters will find ample populations of black bear, deer, grouse, and squirrels, while hikers and wildlife watchers will discover a challenging terrain and a diversity of species.

"While folks can engage in these activities in many places, the Big Survey WMA is a substantial addition to Virginia's public access recreational opportunities. Because VDGIF was able to act on acquiring Big Survey, this opportunity will be available in perpetuity. Our sons, daughters, and their descendants will have the chance to enjoy the results of our land and wildlife management efforts."

Visitors to Big Survey will quickly realize why the four-year process, which began in 1997, to purchase the property was so worthwhile. Mixed pine and hardwood forests dominate the WMA, and Stuart, Lick, Sand, and Swecker mountains create a remarkable panorama.

Indeed, on my first visit to Big Survey in late December of last year, I could easily imagine come spring the gobbles of mature toms and the drummings of male grouse reverberating across those mountain sides; the lilting tunes of Carolina wrens, towhees, and scarlet tanagers adding ambience as well. The land is also known as an important respite for migrating neotropical songbirds in the spring and fall.

VDGIF game biologist Betsy Stinson says that state biologists are still getting to know the area but have already identified the WMA as a haunt for ovenbirds, pine warblers, pileated woodpeckers, and black-and-white warblers. Species designated by Partners in Flight as priority species for management that are likely to occur on the property include Swainson's warbler, wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, eastern wood peewee, hooded warbler, northern parula, and prairie warbler.

On my December excursion, Jerry Westling and Jesse Hall of Troutville accompanied me on a late muzzleloader season hunt. We walked into the backcountry of the WMA by means of one of the many trails that crisscross it. Passing by powerline right-of-ways, stone outcroppings, rhododendron/mountain laurel copses, and dense second growth forest, we eventually separated and took stands.

The air temperature upon our arrival was just 17 degrees, and a brisk wind blowing down the mountain surely sent the wind chill factor down to near zero. Yet, Hall killed a yearling buck, Westling passed on several deer, and we all saw additional game—specifically grouse and squirrels—and evidence left by bear and turkeys.

On the way down the mountain, my group encountered Sammy Hagee and his son Jeremy from Wytheville. The elder Hagee was helping his offspring drag an antlerless deer back to the road, and I stopped to congratulate the duo and asked them what they thought about the Old Dominion's newest public land.

"Big Survey is a great thing for the sportsmen of western Virginia," said Sammy. "The individual who didn't have a place to hunt on private land, now has somewhere to go."

A certain Mr. O'Hara would like-

©Rob & Ann Simpson

©Bruce Ingram

Not only do the power lines that criss-cross Big Survey offer a different kind of habitat, but they serve as landmarks for navigating your way around this expansive 8,300-acre wildlife management area. Opposite page: Big Survey has a large diversity of bird life that includes many species, like the neotropical black and white warbler.

ly have expressed similar sentiments. Hopefully, conservationists can look forward to more wildlife management areas being added to Virginia's lineup in the coming years.

Big Survey WMA can be reached via Interstate 81 at either exit 77 or 80. State Routes 696 and 640 and Sheffy School Road all lead to the public land. □

Bruce Ingram is a nationally renowned outdoor writer and photographer, and lifelong resident of southwest Virginia. He has authored numerous books, which include The James River Guide, Fishing and Floating on Virginia's Finest.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) was created by the General Assembly in 1966. The VOF's purpose, under law, is to "promote the preservation of open space lands and to encourage private gifts of money, securities, land, or other property to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, open-space, and recreational areas of the Commonwealth."

At this writing, the VOF holds easements on over 165,000 acres in 64 Virginia jurisdictions. Among the land types protected are watershed, scenic views, settings of historic homes, and land adjacent to public parks and game preserves. The majority of operating expenses of the VOF comes from annual appropriations of the General Assembly.

Conservation easements are voluntary restrictions on the use of land agreed to by the landowner and the VOF or one of its assignees. It is important to realize that the landowner decides what kind of restrictions he wants to accept for his property. Of great interest is the fact that the Internal Revenue Service establishes standards for easements which, if met, qualify the donation of the easement for tax deductions.

I am a strong believer in conservation easements and the VOF. I placed a conservation easement on 122 acres of land I own on Potts Mountain in Craig County and am in the process of placing 136 acres, which I recently bought, adjacent to that property in the same conservation easement.

The type of easement that I selected allows me and my posterity to put no more than two structures on the 258 acres. I will be passing on the property to my son, and I hope he will do the same for his children. Whoever owns the property in the future will be assured of having a place to hunt, hike, camp, birdwatch, and to engage in any number of outdoor activities.

For more information on the VOF, contact the organization at 203 Governor St., Suite 317, Richmond, VA 23219 (804-225-2147), www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.com. □

At the End

It was a Bill Norman Little N crankbait in chartreuse with a black back. I like it because it casts like a rock on spinning or casting tackle and it catches fish. Today—it was the mid-1980s—was no exception: several chunky largemouth bass, one at 4 pounds even, pounced on it earlier. So, I wasn't surprised when my retrieve abruptly stopped and I set the hooks on a very large fish.

After several minutes of fighting this thing, I decided it had to be at least 10 pounds and a lake record. I was half right: it was a 10 pound, 4 ounce northern pike according to the scales at Fountainhead Regional Park. No one said anything, so it probably wasn't a record. I took it home and cut it into 1-inch steaks with a handsaw. Broiled with a brushing of Italian salad dressing and graced with a few sprigs of fresh dill and lemon slices, it was delicious.

A Special Watering Hole

The 2,100-acre Occoquan Reservoir, near Lorton in Northern Virginia, is a unique place. The water is owned by the Fairfax County Water Authority (FCWA); several parks along its shores are operated by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), and the fishery is managed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). That's a lot of letters, but they add up to a really neat place with plenty of outdoor recreation to offer.

The reservoir was formed by damming the Occoquan River below its junction with Bull Run.

of the Water

story & photos
by King Montgomery

Northern Virginia's Occoquan Reservoir offers anglers and wildlife enthusiasts an outdoor treasure in an urban setting.

The dam sits just upriver of the scenic village of Occoquan. It contains a warmwater fishery with largemouth bass, some smallmouth bass and an occasional striped bass, and plenty of crappie (both black and white), bluegill, yellow perch, carp, and several kinds of catfish. The Virginia record flathead catfish, weighing a shade over 66 pounds, was caught and released here in the 1980s.

The stream valleys of the Occoquan River and its Bull Run tributary were once home to the Doag (or Dogue) group of Chief Powhatan's Confederacy of the Algonkian Indian tribe. In the Algonkian language "Occoquan" means "at the end of the water," probably a reference to the river's broad juncture with the tidal Potomac River.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

The Fountainhead Regional Park, located at the widest spot on the Occoquan Reservoir, the nearby Sandy Run Regional Park, and Bull Run Marina are all part of the NVRPA. NVRPA is comprised of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties; and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. Residents of these jurisdictions enjoy discounted rental and other recreational fees at the 20 NVRPA facilities throughout Northern Virginia. The three parks mentioned above cover almost 5,000 acres of protected woodlands that host a myriad of species of plants and animals. This unspoiled wilderness forms a critical riparian buffer for the watershed and helps guarantee clean, clear water for drinking before the precious liquid flows into the environmentally-threatened tidal Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

The Fountainhead Regional Park and Bull Run Marina (which is operated by George Mason University) offer fishing, boating, camping, hiking, biking, equestrian trails, pic-

Above: Carl Martin is one of the best anglers on Occoquan Reservoir. Here he casts to largemouth bass during the first light of early morning. Fountainhead Regional Park is open dawn to dusk, from mid-March to mid-November. Right: The "bragging board" at the park overlooking Occoquan Reservoir is dedicated to the late Monroe Parker, a great admirer of the park.

nicking, and, at Fountainhead, miniature golf. There are several wilderness trails for hiking, ranging from 1.5 to 17.5 miles. The 17.5 mile Bull Run–Occoquan Trail (BROT) crosses preserved forestland from Fountainhead through the Bull Run Marina, Hemlock Overlook Regional Park, the Virginia Route 28 access point, to the Bull Run Regional Park near Centreville. The BROT, for pedestrians and horses only, is maintained by a cooperative effort between the NVRPA and caring volunteers such as REI Outfitters of Bailey's Crossroads, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, the Clifton Horse Society, and other groups and individuals.

Boats on the reservoir are limited to a maximum of 10-horsepower motors. You may launch your own boat or rent one from the park office. A johnboat is $12 per day ($10.50 if you live in the NVRPA jurisdiction), an electric trolling motor is $10 and a deep-cycle marine battery is $8; $28.50 for a boat and motor all day is a pretty good deal.

Fisheries biologist John Odenkirk, of the VDGIF's Fredericksburg office, notes that some the Old Dominion's best bass lakes are in Northern Virginia. Recent electrofishing studies show that of 19 lakes, small impoundments, and larger reservoirs, Occoquan Reservoir ranks second behind Fairfax County's Burke Lake in relative density of largemouth bass over 15 inches in length. I'm glad I live 10 minutes from one and 20 minutes from the other!

Remembering Pappy

When I regularly fished the Occoquan Reservoir in the 1980s, Monroe Parker, a part-time Fountainhead Regional Park employee, was an angling mentor to many people and a full-time kibitzer to all—he had a marvelous sense of humor and was an outstanding fisherman. Parker, known affectionately as "Pappy" to friends and strangers alike, was a retired assistant principal from nearby Edison High School. After Pappy died, his numerous fishing friends, many of whom he taught to fish, organized several bass tournaments to fund a memorial plaque and the "Monroe Parker Braggin' Board," now located on the marina lakeside deck.

The benefit tournaments became so popular they led to the formation of the Fountainhead Bass Club, a conglomeration of area anglers who hold twice-monthly bass tournaments from mid-March to mid-October, when the final "Classic" competition is held for those fishers who

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Fountainhead Regional Park and Bull Run Marina offer boat rentals, camping, hiking and horseback riding trails, and some great places for a picnic.

OUTDOOR CATALOG

Virginia Wildlife

Virginia Wildlife OUTDOOR

VW-31

Mantel Clock

This decorative mantel clock is crafted of solid cherry wood, beautifully engraved with a deer in a wildlife setting on the base of the clock. The clock face displays the VDGIF logo. This attractive collectable is available in limited quantity. Measures approximately 6 1/2" x 4."

Item VW-31. $29.95

VW-32

VW-33

Desktop Cardholder with Clock

This attractive desktop accessory with clock has been crafted of solid cherry and has been beautifully engraved. Two styles are available, hummingbirds or the bald eagle. Measures approximately 2" x 4 1/2".

Item VW-32 (hummingbirds) or VW-33 (eagle). $14.95

VW-30

2002 Limited Edition Virginia Wildlife Knife

The third in our series of limited edition *Virginia Wildlife* knives has been customized by Bear Cutlery and made in the USA. Each knife is serial numbered, has the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries distinctive logo engraved on the bolster and has *Virginia Wildlife* etched on the blade. This attractive folding knife has genuine stag handles and is approximately 9 inches when fully opened. Each knife comes in a solid walnut gift box. A limited quantity of our 2001 edition knife is still available.

Item VW-30 (2002 knife). $75.00
Item VW-14 (2001 knife). $75.00

VW-34

Five piece Coaster Set

Made of solid cherry, this attractive set of 4 wooden coasters is packaged in a customized wooden box, engraved with a cardinal on a dogwood branch.

Item VW-34. $24.95

CATALOG

VW-35

Yellow Lab Pups Tapestry Throw

Created from a photograph by Virginia photographer Dwight Dyke, these five Lab pups lay about in the warmth of their basket alongside the tools of their trade. This tapestry throw, created exclusively for VDGIF, is triple jacquard woven of 100% cotton, machine washable, and measures approximately 52" x 69."

Item VW-35. $44.95

VW-36

Matching Yellow Labs Tapestry Pillow

Item VW-36. $19.95

VW-39

VW-40

Virginia Wildlife Hats

Our two new *Virginia Wildlife* hats are 100% cotton and size adjustable. These attractive hats have been embroidered with our *Virginia Wildlife* magazine logo and feature either a deer or a bass for the wildlife and fishing enthusiast. Hats available in High or Low Profile.

Item VW-37 (low profile - bass), VW-38 (high profile - bass), VW-39 (low profile - deer), VW-40 (high profile - deer), VW-9 (low profile - *Virginia Wildlife*), VW-8 (high profile - *Virginia Wildlife*) $11.95 ea.

VW-38

VW-37

VW-9

VW-8

VW-11

VW-12

Pocket Timepiece

VDGIF offers once again our elegant timepiece.
Each watch has been crafted especially for VDGIF by the Jules Jurgensen watch company. These fine collectables are available with either a stag or an eagle and each watch carries the VDGIF logo on the dial.
Very limited quantities available. Watches are sold on a first come basis.

Item VW-11 (stag) or VW-12 (eagle). $75.99

ORDER FORM

Item	Description	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
VW-8	High Profile *Virginia Wildlife* Hat	$11.95		
VW-9	Low Profile *Virginia Wildlife* Hat	$11.95		
VW-11	Pocket Timepiece, Stag	$75.99		
VW-12	Pocket Timepiece, Eagle	$75.99		
VW-14	2001 Limited Edition Knife	$75.00		
VW-16	Custom Walnut Plaque	$24.95		
VW-26	Medallion Key Ring	$ 5.00		
VW-30	2002 Limited Edition Knife	$75.00		
VW-31	Mantel Clock	$29.95		
VW-32	Desktop Cardholder/Clock,Hummingbird	$14.95		
VW-33	Desktop Cardholder/Clock,Eagle	$14.95		
VW-34	Five Piece Coaster Set	$24.95		
VW-35	Lab Tapestry Throw	$44.95		
VW-36	Lab Tapestry Pillow	$19.95		
VW-37	Low Profile Bass Hat	$11.95		
VW-38	High Profile Bass Hat	$11.95		
VW-39	Low Profile Deer Hat	$11.95		
VW-40	High Profile Deer Hat	$11.95		
VW-99	Shipping and Handling	$ 6.25		6.25
			total amount enclosed	

Name _____
(please print)

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Payment Method: ☐ Credit Card ☐ Check/Money Order

☐ Visa or ☐ Master Card

_ _

Do not leave spaces between numbers Exp. Month Year

_____
Credit Card Customer Signature

Make check payable to Treasurer of Virginia, fill out form, clip, and mail to Virginia Wildlife Outdoor Catalog, VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. Please allow three to four weeks for delivery.

VW-16

Custom Walnut Plaque

Display your trophy fish or hunting certificates as well as other awards with this custom plaque. Each plaque contains two medallions commissioned by VDGIF. Plaques are available in walnut.

Item VW-16. $24.95

VW-26

Medallion Key Ring

Secure your house or car keys with our medallion key ring. Each medallion displays the VDGIF logo.

Item VW-26. $5.00

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qualify. There are no club dues or meetings. All you do is show up with a boat and fishing partner, pay $40 per boat, get a short list of tournament rules, and go fishing for eight hours. You can also ante up $5 per boat for the "big fish" award: whoever catches the heaviest largemouth takes the pot. Eighty percent of the fees is immediately paid back in prize money, and 20 percent is held to be paid back in the October championship event.

I was at a recent "blast off" and weigh-in for one of the July tournaments, and noticed several things: These anglers have fun and there is a lot more laughing than bragging. Also, the bass are fat, healthy, and beautifully marked. When young Tyler Sparks weighed a 5 pound, 11 ounce largemouth bass to take "big fish" honors, all the contestants were almost as happy as he was, and his dad couldn't wipe the grin off his face. Good sportsmanship, pride, and having a good time are what fishing tournaments should be all about. Monroe Parker must be smiling down happily on these good people.

Reading the Water

Carl Martin is one of the best anglers on the Occoquan Reservoir. He knows its waters well. One day this summer, Carl, who works at Dulles International Airport, took Smokey Davis and me on a fishing excursion of the reservoir. Smokey is a retired administrator and teacher in the special education field, and is now a part-time employee of Fountainhead Regional Park. He teaches fishing at the park and seems to be following nicely in the footsteps of his old friend and angling buddy, Monroe Parker.

Carl, who is always near the top of the tournament standings, says you can catch fish in obvious places such as in rocks, fallen trees, and brush, but the real key to angling success on the reservoir is to read the water by watching how subtle currents form breaks and eddies, and interpreting the bottom terrain by observing the depth-finder and the surrounding geography / geology. Often, for example, the fish are in the middle of the old creek or river bed and not on the fallen shoreline trees. Carl also likes to work deep points with crankbaits and plastic worms or lizards. All I know is he consistently put us onto bass in the main reservoir and in the Bull Run arm.

Tyler Sparks (left) won "big fish" at one of the twice-monthly Fountainhead Bass Club's tournaments. Tyler and his father, Roger, finished high in the standing with this nice catch, which they released back to the cool waters.

The floating, wheelchair-accessible, fishing pier at Fountainhead Regional Park was built by VDGIF. Bass, crappie, bluegill, and catfish are caught here regularly.

A Real Gem

Northern Virginia is not all asphalt, cars, and people; some blue and green still remains. Some of the finest fishing in the Commonwealth is just a few miles from Washington, DC, and the Occoquan Reservoir is the best bass fishery of the larger impoundments, including Lake Anna, according to studies.

I've eaten a lot of tasty crappie from its waters over the past 20 years, because, thanks to the Fairfax County Water Authority, the water is clean and well-managed. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority has over 5,000 acres of preserved forest and riparian buffer that helps maintain the health of the ecosystem. And the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries keeps an eye on the fish populations so we all have an opportunity to fish in tournaments, drop a worm or minnow from the fishing pier, and have healthy crappie for dinner now and then.

King Montgomery lives in Burke and is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

Occoquan Reservoir Information

- *Fountainhead Regional Park* (703) 250-9124. Directions: Take Route 123 north from Lorton, turn left on Hampton Road, and go 3 miles to the park entrance on the left. From Fairfax City, travel south on Route 123 for about 10 miles; turn right on Hampton Road, and go 3 miles to park entrance on the left.
- *Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority* is located at 5400 Ox Road (Route 123), Fairfax Station. For more information on all the NVRPA parks call (703) 352-5900 or visit the Web site at www.NVRPA.org.
- *The Fairfax County Water Authority* (703) 698-5600 or see www.fcwa.org.
- *Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries*, Fredericksburg Office, (540) 899-4169.
- *Fountainhead Bass Club*, David Blank, president, (703) 361-9182.
- *REI Outfitters*, 3509 Carlin Springs Road, Bailey's Crossroads, (703) 379-9400.
- *DeLorme's Virginia Atlas & Gazetteer* page 76, (207) 846-7000 or www.delorme.com.

Wildland Walk

Wild in the Woods

by Carol A. Heiser
illustrations by Spike Knuth

"The time of the falling of leaves has come again. Once more in our morning walk we tread upon carpets of gold and crimson, of brown and bronze, woven by the winds or the rains out of these delicate textures while we slept."

John Burroughs (from the essay "The Falling Leaves," in a collection of Burroughs' writings called Under the Maples*)*

Above: In the fall, plants like the staghorn sumac *(Rhus hirta [typhina]* and even poison ivy *(Toxicodendron [Rhus] radicans)* (previous page) produce fruit that is beneficial as a food source to many birds and animals, like the yellow-rumped warbler *(Dendrocia coronata)*.

Fall is a time of calming, warm hues, crackling campfires on moon-filled nights, and refreshing walks on brisk, bright mornings. The season affords us an opportunity to slow down and drink in all the changes that unfold around us in woodlands, meadows, and other natural havens. Take a walk or hike in the country, explore the quiet places where wildlife dwells, and enjoy the wonderful fall color. Pause and examine each of the features you find—ripe flower heads, a scraping in the leaves, a track in the mud by a stream. As you settle into the slower pace and become more attuned to the rhythms of autumn, you are bound to find evidence of wildlife and observe how plants, too, adapt to the changing cycles.

Palette of Change

Autumn's colorful transformation can make identifying trees like following a paint-by-number kit. Red maple, dogwood, sweetgum, blackgum and sourwood are usually red. Birch, tulip poplar, redbud and hickory are always yellow.

There are many theories that explain why and how leaves change color, and they involve a bit of simple chemistry. The most commonly cited one is that change in leaf color is induced by *photoperiodism*, a change in the amount of daylight hours that occurs over a given period of time. Seasonal changes in temperature and rainfall are also believed to influence the spectacular display. Towards the end of September, after the autumnal equinox, the amount of daylight begins to decrease by about two minutes each day. This reduction in daylight triggers a sequence of *senescence* or dying off: hardwoods gradually become dormant, and the process causes plant parts such as leaves to die or senesce.

During the spring and summer growing season, plant leaves appear predominantly green because they produce a pigment called *chlorophyll* in large quantities. Chlorophyll is a chemical responsible for the uptake of the sun's energy through the leaves. The chemical helps drive a reaction called photosynthesis in which the sun's energy is converted into sugars that the plant uses for food. Other pigments are also present in the summer, but they are not visible to us because they occur in comparably smaller quantities. These include orange carotinoids—the same pigments found in carrots—and xanthophylls, which are yellow. The green chlorophyll simply masks these other pigments.

The crisp, cold nights and shorter days of autumn cause a change that tips this balance. Chlorophyll production is reduced or ceases, and the yellow and orange pigments begin to show through the green. The dying cells also produce new chemicals called anthocyanins, particularly if the days are bright and sunny, and these pigments impart the brilliant reds and purples we've come to love. Some researchers believe the red pigment acts as a sunscreen that protects leaf tissue from radiation while the tissue is being broken down to salvage its nutrients. Meanwhile, water and nutrients are pulled away from the leaves into the stems, and plant cells begin producing more sugars and other components. These chemicals combine to form a type of antifreeze that will protect the stems and roots during the winter.

On your walk, colorful leaves aren't the only riches you will see. Keep an eye out for the full, red berries of smooth and staghorn sumac that add zest to hedgerows, field borders and forest margins. When the seed heads are freshly ripe, they can be boiled in water to make a tangy, tart tea that tastes like lemonade. Other fall fruits are also edible, such as the sweet meats of hickory nuts, easy to crack open with a rock while you're on the trail. Check out the Peterson field guide to *Edible Wild Plants* for more easy-to-find tidbits.

Trail Treasures

If you're lucky, you might see a shed deer antler from the previous winter. Male whitetail deer lose their antlers every year at the end of the breeding season, when hormonal changes and shorter daylight hours take place. Antler shedding begins in late December and lasts till about March. The antlers can be a good indication of where the deer have spent most of their time, since antlers are often found near food plots and cutovers, along established buck trails, or associated with bedding areas. Over the spring and summer, nature wastes no time in putting the cast-off antlers to good use, as small mammals like chipmunks, mice, and squirrels gnaw on the bony material to retrieve calcium and other nutrients. By the time fall rolls around, you'll have to look carefully on your walks to see antler remnants. If you do find a fragment or bone, examine it closely for the telltale signs of rodents' teeth, which leave small grooves and rough edges.

Hitchhikers

As the growing season wanes, plants prepare for winter survival by producing seeds from the summer's flower crop. Many seeds

Burs are seeds or fruits that have small spines or other protrusions that cling to an animal's fur or a hiker's clothing. The seeds of a burdock, a plant in the composite or daisy family, have stiff bracts that are hooked at the tip, while a cocklebur has oval seeds surrounded by many hooks. Spanish needles have long, thin seeds with prongs that contain tiny, backward-pointing barbs. The seeds of plants in the legume or pea family are notoriously known as "beggar ticks;" these have numerous, tiny hairs that contain even smaller hooks, visible with a hand-lens.

have special adaptations which enable them to attach to an animal's fur. The unsuspecting mammal carries these "hitchhikers" along until the seeds drop off somewhere else to grow. In this way, wildlife has an important role in dispersing seeds. An animal's travels provide a convenient mechanism for plants to become established in new areas and more likely to survive as a result.

While you're on your fall wildland walk, some seeds are likely to hitch a ride on your pants legs or other clothing. If you have children with you, you can turn this interesting detail of nature into a fun, educational activity for them. Have them pull old, fuzzy socks over their shoes and walk through a grassy field or along the unmowed edge of a fence or wooded area. Once the socks are covered with "beggar ticks" and the like, remove the socks and examine the various seeds collected. Make small drawings of each type of seed in a nature journal, and tally the numbers of each type to see if some plant species produce more seeds than others. Then repeat the "sock walk" at a different site and compare the results, to see if there's a difference in plant composition between the two areas. Use a *Field Guide to Wildflowers*, by the National Audubon Society, and other practical guides to learn more about the plants observed on your walks.

A Home in a Ball

Another intriguing find you may come across on a walk are knobby growths on twigs and stems, strangely shaped bumps on leaves, or brown, delicate balls on the ground. These unusual swellings or growths are called *galls*, and they represent a time-worn cause and effect relationship between certain insects and plants.

Various wasps, mites, adelgids, and midges lay their eggs in the leaves and stems of particular host plants, where their eggs or larvae can develop within the safe confines of the plant's tissue. As the female inserts the ovipositor or egg-laying tube, a tiny wound is made in the plant, and a chemical enzyme she releases stimulates the plant cells around the wound to grow at an abnormally fast rate. The resulting gall that the plant produces is a convenient home that provides food, shelter from predators, and moisture to the developing insect inside. Sometimes the offspring produces secretions that continue to stimulate the growth of the gall, until the new insect is ready to emerge. Galls are formed in the spring and summer while plants are growing, but they are easiest to see in the fall as plants lose their leaves and stems are exposed.

Each species of gall-making insect produces its own type of gall, and the insect is usually associated with only one corresponding species of plant. The easiest example to find is the goldenrod ball gall, a somewhat round to football shaped swelling on the stem of a common goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) that is caused by a small, brown-winged fly (*Eurosta*

Below: The live oak gall wasp *(Callirhytis quercuspomiformis)* produces a gall, which is attached to oak leaves. This allows the wasp eggs and larvae to develop within the safe confines of the gall. Some galls can grow to the size of small apples.

solidaginis). This fly lays its eggs on the surface of the plant; the young larva then hatch in summer and bore through the stem and induce a gall. But the drama doesn't end there. In the fall, the larva bores a tunnel to the outermost layer of the stem tissue but does not come out. Instead, it returns back inside the gall where it will overwinter in the larval stage, protected from the elements. In spring, the larva transforms into a pupa. When the pupa completes its development into an adult fly, the new insect pushes its way out of the tunnel it had made and finally leaves the gall behind.

Other galls you might see are those on oak trees, formed by small, stingless wasps. Oak galls are very common on all parts of the plant, including the roots and acorns, and most notably as woody swellings on the twigs.

Did You Know...

A "harvest moon" is the full moon that occurs closest to the autumnal equinox, which occurred this year on September 23. In October, the full moon that will follow the harvest moon is called the "hunter's moon," which will be October 21. These two moons are notable because they rise at a point close to the exact eastern point of the horizon only a few minutes later each night. One can, therefore, enjoy several successive evenings of moonrise close to sunset, and there is strong moonlight almost all night.

Autumn Lore

- It will be a bad winter if trees keep their leaves until late in the fall.
- When squirrels bury their nuts early, it will be a hard winter.
- If the wooly worm's head or stripes are more black than brown, it will be a hard winter.

{Source: www.ncnatural.com/wildflwr/fall/folklore.html }

Learning More...

An excellent field guide packed with great photos is *Fall Color and Woodland Harvests: A Guide to the More Colorful Fall Leaves and Fruits of the Eastern Forests*, by C. Ritchie Bell and Anne H. Lindsey, c. 1990 Laurel Hill Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (184 pp.).

USDA Forest Service Fall Colors Web Site at www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors/ includes fall foliage hot spots, family fun activities, photo galleries, web cams, the brochure "Why Leaves Change Color," and more.

Find a hiking or walking trail near you at www.trails.com which lists numerous parks and other public places in Virginia to explore nature.

Exchange your outdoor experiences with other enthusiasts in the Nature Walk Message Club at www./groups.yahoo.com/group/nature-walk/ □

Left: a Carolina chickadee *(Poecile [Parus] carolinesis)* perches next to a gall attached to a goldenrod.

Journal

VDGIF 2002 Calendar of Events

October 18-20: *Virginia Outdoors Weekend,* Westmoreland State Park. For information call (804) 367-6351.

November 2: *Family Falconry Day,* Camp Virginia Jaycee, Roanoke. For information call (804) 367-6351.

December 13-14: *Women's Deer Hunt,* York River State Park. For information call (804) 367-6351. □

Hunters "Get HIP" It's the Law.

All migratory bird hunters must be certified through the Harvest Information Program (HIP) before they can legally hunt any kind of migratory birds in the United States. If you hunt migratory birds without being certified you can be ticketed and fined. Hunter participation in this program is critical for conservation of migratory bird resources and protection of the hunting heritage. To register, hunters can call 1-800-938-5263 or use the Department's Web site to register on-line at www.dgif.state.va.us. □

Scary Thought

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams, along with everyone else at their home in Fredericksburg, are long time readers of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine. To show their fondness for the magazine they passed along a rather humorous photograph to share with other readers.

During the cool days of autumn and around Halloween the Williams' like to place a rather

friendly looking scarecrow on their front porch to welcome visitors to their home. Last year, to help give their holiday decoration a more "natural" look, they decided to add a copy of *Virginia Wildlife*.

After we received the photograph the thought occurred to us what a great way to attract new readers to the magazine and a wonderful chance to remind our regular readers that renewing your subscription isn't as "scary" as it seems. With a simple phone call to 1-800-710-9369 you can renew your subscription to *Virginia Wildlife* magazine at the low price of $10.00 for 12 issues or $24.00 for three years or you could "shock" your friends by sending them a subscription. □

Hooked on Urban Fishing

The old saying "The proof is in the pudding" certainly holds true for Kyle Britton, from Richmond. He caught this trophy brown trout last year at Dorey Park in Henrico County, one of the many lakes in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Urban Fishing Program. Kyle, who loves to spend time fishing with his grandfather Al Painter, decided to have the beautiful fish mounted so he could proudly display it for all to see.

Over the last nine years the Urban Fishing Program has provided high-quality fishing opportunities for hundreds of anglers, young and old, in urban and suburban areas. Catchable trout, like the one Kyle caught, are stocked in six lakes around Virginia, during the colder months of November through April. The lakes include: Cook Lake (Cameron Run Regional Park) in Alexandria, Locust Shade Pond in Prince William County, Dorey Park Lake in Henrico County, Shields Lake (Byrd Park) in the city of Richmond, Lake Biggins

Kyle Britton from Richmond really has something to smile about as he displays a beautiful brown trout that he caught last winter at Dorey Park, one of VDGIF's special urban fishing lakes.

(Huntington Park) in Newport News, and Northwest River Park in Chesapeake. In addition to a freshwater fishing license, a trout license is required to fish these waters from November 1 through April 30. □

Left: Suzie Gilley, VDGIF Wildlife Education Coordinator, is congratulated by William L. Woodfin, Jr. Director of VDGIF, for being named Project WILD Coordinator of the Year.

Virginia Wildlife Educator Earns Recognition

by Julia Dixon

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) is pleased to announce that Wildlife Education Coordinator Suzie Gilley has been named Project WILD Coordinator of the Year by the Council for Environmental Education–Project WILD. This award is given to an individual based on extraordinary efforts in communication, leadership, initiative, and innovation in the advancement of environmental education through Project WILD. Suzie Gilley was named this year's recipient at the annual Project WILD conference in St. Catherine's, Canada. The Board of Game and Inland Fisheries recognized Gilley for her achievement at their July 18, 2002, meeting.

Suzie Gilley grew up in the community of Dumfries, Virginia, and can not remember when she wasn't outside either playing in the woods behind her parents' house or along the banks of the Potomac River. As a life-long Girl Scout she learned the importance of the environment and being steward of the land. Deciding on a career in wildlife, she headed to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, earning a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Wildlife Resource Management. Upon graduation, Suzie was employed as a science education teacher at the Mathematics and Science Center in Richmond Virginia.

In 1982, she joined the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, becoming the first Project WILD coordinator for the agency as well as the first in an eastern state. Since then 23,000 Virginia teachers have participated in Project WILD 6-hour in-service workshops across the Commonwealth. With her guiding hand, Project WILD has been correlated to the Science Standards of Learning and has provided teachers with information and exciting learning activities to meet those standards. The Virginia Department of Education has recognized Project WILD as one of the premier programs that teachers can use to meet the Science Standards of Learning.

In addition to her work as VDGIF's Wildlife Education Coordinator and Project WILD Coordinator, Gilley has served on several statewide and national education committees including the Virginia Resource Use Education Council, the Virginia Naturally Exemplary Schools Committee, the national Project WILD Program Committee, and the Project Underground Board.

The 2002 Commonwealth of Virginia Parks and Natural Areas General Obligations Bond

On Election Day, Nov. 5, 2002, Virginians will vote on a $119 million Virginia Parks and Natural Areas bond referendum.

If approved, bond funds will be used to help conserve Virginia's important natural resources and provide more recreational offerings. It will allow for the purchase of three new state parks, more land for 11 existing parks, 10 new natural area preserves and additions to eight existing preserves.

There are no tax increases associated with this bond, and it will not hurt Virginia's AAA bond rating.

Passage of the $119 million bond referendum would provide $30 million to purchase new park and natural area land, $6.5 million for additional land to existing parks, and $4.5 million to protect park land from severe shoreline erosion. The remaining $78 million would be for much-needed construction, improvement and repair projects such as cabins, campgrounds and other offerings throughout Virginia's 34 state parks.

Bond funds will be used for specific projects, not operating costs.

Virginia's state park system this year was named the best-run park system in America despite ranking 50th in terms of percentage of state budge spent on parks and 49th in per capita state park spending. Passage of the referendum would allow Virginia State Parks to serve families and visitors more completely.

Virginia's Natural Heritage Programs are among the world's best. State biologists have identified 1,450 critical natural areas. Only 36 have been dedicated Natural Area Preserves. Money from the bond will help protect additional natural areas.

Park visitors, nearly 40 percent from outside the state, contributed $144 million to the state's economy in 2001. Bond money would help stimulate our still sluggish, post-9/11 economy, particularly in rural areas.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Parks and Natural Areas Bond Act of 2002 was overwhelmingly approved by both houses of the Virginia General Assembly and Governor Warner in April 2002.

Please cast you vote on November 5.

Learn more about this and other bond issues by calling 1-800-933-PARK or visiting www.dcr.state.va.us/bond/. □

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Guaranteed Tender Goose

To insure your goose is tender, use a Rival 5-Quart Crock-Pot or equivalent. This heats and cooks around the outside. The meat browns while cooking.

In order to fit a four pound or larger dressed goose into your unit, remove the two leg/thigh quarters from the carcass for placing later in the Crock-Pot. Then use a sharp fillet knife and bone out the two breasts. With your knife, skin each breast as you would a fish fillet. Also remove skin from leg/thigh quarters. After cooking, slice both breasts. The leg/thigh quarters will be tender and moist, so enjoy them too.

Menu

Carrot Soup
Goose In Madeira
Applesauce
Baked Yams
Mexican Fruit Cake

Carrot Soup

1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, pressed
1 pound carrots, sliced
2 large baking potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 cans (14½ ounces each) chicken broth
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Chopped fresh chives

Melt butter in a large, deep skillet. Add onion and garlic and sauté until tender. Add carrot, potato, and broth and cook 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Process half of carrot mixture in a blender or processor until smooth. Repeat procedure with remaining carrot mixture. Stir in lemon rind and juice and sprinkle each serving with chopped chives. Makes 6 cups.

Goose in Madeira
(For Crock-Pot)

4 pound or larger dressed goose
Salt and pepper
1 medium Vadalia or other sweet onion, sliced
½ cup chicken broth
½ cup Madeira wine
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Corn starch
1 tablespoon mint jelly, optional

Salt and pepper goose pieces. Put sliced onion on bottom of crock-pot liner. Place goose pieces on top of onion. Pour broth, Madeira, and lemon juice over all. Cook, covered, on LOW heat for 7 to 8 hours or until fork tender. Thicken juices with equal amounts of corn starch and water. If gravy is too sour, add mint jelly. Serves 4.

Applesauce

8 large firm apples
½ cup water
½ to ¾ cup sugar
Cinnamon or nutmeg to taste

Wash, core and quarter apples. Combine with water in a covered saucepan and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until apples are tender. Press through a sieve or colander and then add ½ cup sugar and taste. Add more if needed. If desired, add cinnamon or nutmeg to taste. Serve hot or cold. Makes 6 servings.
Note: The apples may be peeled before cooking and need not be put through a sieve unless desired.

Baked Yams

Use cured sweet potatoes. Wash and dry. Bake in oven at 400° F. for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375° F. and continue baking until potatoes are soft, about 1 hour for medium potatoes and 1½ hours for large. Do not wrap sweet potatoes with foil. This steams potatoes, and you will not have that sweet, syrupy flavor of a good baked yam. This is also true of yams cooked in the microwave.

Mexican Fruit Cake

1 can (20 ounces) crushed pineapple, undrained
2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 eggs
1 cup chopped walnuts
2 cups sugar

Preheat oven to 350° F. Place all ingredients in a large bowl and mix with a wooden spoon. Pour into a greased 13 x 9-inch pan. Bake for 40 minutes, or until cake tests done. Makes 8 to 12 servings.

Frosting:
2 cups powdered sugar
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese
1 stick (4 ounces) butter or margarine, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla

Blend all ingredients until smooth and frost cake while hot. □

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURE
Virginia's Finest

Wisdom in

Wood

In memory of the great American chestnut tree.

story by Dean Owens
illustration by
Michael Simon

About 20 years ago while hunting in the mountains of Southwest Virginia, I came across an old American chestnut snag. Knowing it was one of the last of its kind is what brought me back year after year to admire it. Finally I asked the landowner for it and was delighted when he said yes. When I went to bring it out, to my surprise it had fallen. My two children Amy, 12, and Alex, eight, were eager to help. It took a lot of work, but we were glad we saved some of the past. While driving home I was just thinking if the old tree could talk. I wonder what it would say?

"I am an American chestnut tree. I've spent my life in Buchanan County, Virginia, on a small ridge overlooking Brushy Fork. I've seen some good times and bad times, seen bad winters and hot summers. Many days the sunrise has cast its shadows upon my branches and set in the evening to give way to the moon and stars for awhile until its return.

I am one of the last of my kind; my ancestors were killed by the blight that was brought from Asia on the ships when the Pilgrims emigrated to the New World. Many of them were used for building houses, fences, and firewood. I am not sure exactly how old I am—I think about 200 years. I was almost killed when I was knocked down by a mean old, 12-point buck when I was a sprout. But the Lord blessed me, and I survived.

As I grew older, I was the home and playground for many squirrels, raccoons, and birds.

Deer, turkey, hogs, and even people came to feast on the chestnuts that dropped from my branches. Back then there were more of us, but they have all gone before me and left me alone. My best friend was a big oak tree; we shared the woods together. We even got to touch from time to time when the wind blew a certain direction. In 1905 he was struck by lightning and fell to the ground. I watched my best friend lie for 20 years and finally dissolve into the earth. I saw Indians in the early days; a family of them even made a camp under my shelter one spring night. I wept when they disappeared on up the ridge the next day and out of my sight. I wish I could be like them and see what lies on the other side, but I have to stay because my roots are planted firmly here.

When the disease finally hit me, it was painful. I knew it was the beginning of the end. Even though the sap of my lifeblood was gone and I no longer produced leaves and chestnuts, my spirit lives on. One night I was almost chopped down by coon hunters when a pair of red bones treed a coon in my hollow. But the Lord blessed me again, and my trunk withstood the mighty blows of the sharp axe, and the raccoon and I escaped certain destruction to see the light of another day. I am getting old now, and I can feel my roots getting weak. I don't know how many more windstorms I can withstand before I finally fall and join my friend, the mighty oak.

But who is this young man looking over my trunk this winter's day? His touch is different and so gentle. I feel a special bond. What is it? I wonder! It's so strange! I saw him look back at me as he walked away. But he's gone now, and I stand-alone again.

But wait. the young man returns with two children. Oh! No! A chainsaw! He's cutting me up. I'll probably be burned and turned into ashes after all of these years. But now I feel that familiar touch again. The gentleness of callused hands, and an everlasting love. He handles me with care, he shapes me, and grooms, and forms me into a beautiful gun cabinet. He takes me in his home; he's the best friend I've had since the mighty oak.

I thought it was over for me at my falling but I'm revived. Who knows how long I will remain? My spirit lives on. □

Dean Owens, from Grundy, Virginia, is a first time contributor to Virginia Wildlife *magazine.*

Look for the upcoming *Virginia Wildlife* special December 2002 edition "Stewards of the Land."

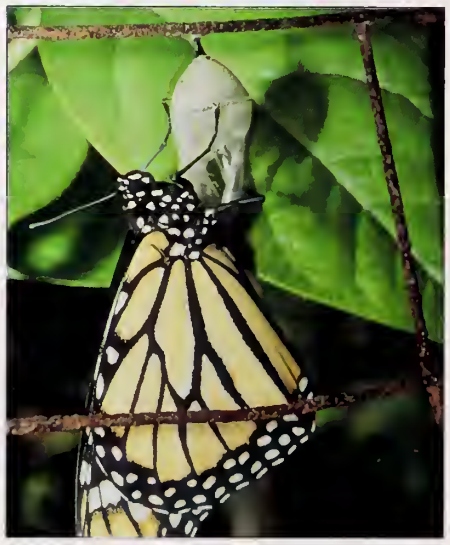
Wild Backyard

story and photos by Marlene A. Condon

Collect Milkweed Seeds for Monarchs

If you want to increase your chances of seeing monarch butterflies, grow some common milkweed *(Asclepias syriaca)* in your yard. Although this is a rather large and coarse plant, its goblet-shaped flowers are interesting to look at and they emit a lovely fragrance. Numerous species of butterflies and other insects visit this milkweed for its generous supply of nectar, but only one kind of butterfly visits especially to reproduce—the Monarch.

With common milkweed growing in your yard, you will have the opportunity from spring through summer to spy female Monarchs laying eggs on your plants. To limit the number of eggs laid per plant, try to grow a patch of milkweed rather than just one or two plants. Then the eggs will be distributed over the larger number of plants. If there are too many butterfly larvae per plant, some or all of the caterpillars could die of starvation. They also could destroy the food plant that sustains their species. Thus butterflies (and moths) try to lay very few eggs per plant and will only deposit more if they are desperate because the host plant is in short supply.



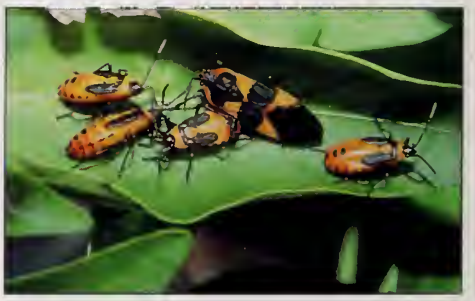
You can witness the marvel of a freshly emerging monarch butterfly from its chrysalis if you grow common milkweed.

Now is the time of year to look for milkweeds growing in fields or perhaps in a friend's yard where you could collect some of the dried seedpods. Prepare an area to plant your seeds by clearing it of other plants and then loosening the soil a bit with a rake. After removing the fluff from each seed in the pod (so that the wind will not carry the seeds away after sowing), place the seeds, one at a time, throughout the area so that they are about a foot apart from each other. Gently rake the soil smooth so that the seeds will be slightly covered by dirt or at least in contact with the soil. Do not bury the seeds!

Next spring should bring you some milkweed plants that will spread in the future via underground rhizomes and seeds. To prevent the yard from being overtaken by milkweed, do not kill the Large Milkweed Bugs that also reproduce upon this plant. Sucking the juice from the seeds, these insects destroy seed viability. □

Milkweed seeds "escaping" from the pod are ready to be collected!

Grow as many plants as possible so that the female can lay only one or just a few eggs per plant. Then there will be enough food for its caterpillars.



Do not kill the milkweed bugs that you will find on your plants. They suck the juice of developing seeds, thus limiting the number of seedlings in your yard the following year.

On The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

Boat Names

Rockin N Reelin	*Miss Behavin'*
Happy Hours	*My Money Hole*
Mate Bait	*Liquid Asset*
Fat Cat	*Temporary Insanity*
Never Again II	*Lazy Daze*
Fish Tales	*Obsession*
Toothfairy	*Fantasea*
Seaduction	*Tranquilizer*
Osprey	*Wet Dream*
Hi Finance	*Diversion*
Luna Sea	*Only 60 Payments*
Windsong	*My Therapy*

Naming a boat can be just as agonizing for a couple as naming their firstborn. Some confess to spending more time on choosing the right name for their boat than spent on the boat choice itself. The safest choice here is to name it after the wife.

My first boat was named to honor my wife and represent the two loves of my life—Patti. It was followed by the name Patti II. Skipping a few, we finally bought our dreamboat—a cabin cruiser that we could actually sleep on with a full galley and head. It displayed from the hull "Wahoo – Charlottesville, VA." The name and hailing port represented the loyalty of its previous owner, a UVA sports fan. However, down on the bay, the name represented a fish. On our first trip to the bay, every call on the radio was looking for a vessel "Wahoo." We decided that had to be the most popular boat name on the bay. A generous dose of rubbing compound and new graphics changed all that to Scribe. So far, we have not found nor heard of another Scribe.

According to Boat/US, "The ancient Egyptians allegedly began the tradition of naming boats centuries ago on the Nile River, and boat owners have been racking their brains ever since for the perfect boat name."

Most recreational boaters never give a thought toward a name for their craft until they install a marine radio. Facing the notion of getting on the radio to identify ones boat can be a positive stimulant. From that point of view, how a name rolls off the tongue is a major consideration in addition to the graphics that represent it on the hull.

According to a Boat/US survey of the top ten most popular boat names, the year 2000 found Serenity at the top of the list followed by Irish Eyes and Island Time. The rest, in order, were Sea Spirit, Obsession, Time Out, Reel Time, Escapade, Southern Comfort, and Serendipity. A new arrival in the boat name records, Dot.Calm, brings us into the computer age.

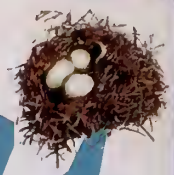
Having wandered through the mental exercise of choosing a name for my boat many times, I would like to offer the beginner a few helpful hints:

1. Popular names lead to much confusion. Attempt to make yours unique.
2. If you need to explain the name, you've got the wrong one.
3. The fewer letters/numbers, the better.
4. Remember, what sounds good today, may embarrass you tomorrow. Let it meet the test of time to see how it wears before you paint your hull.
5. Lots of words can look good but sound pretty funny, odd or unintelligible when spoken—a boat name has to be seen and heard.

When you discover the name is wrong don't hesitate, change it. I have successfully removed a name painted on the stern with the careful use of a rubbing compound leaving the base coat of paint or gel coat intact. Sanding it down and repainting is a guaranteed method for wooden hulls. If your boat name is displayed with stick on, vinyl graphics, you can use a hair dryer to make them curl and peel right off. Acetone will remove any trace of the glue.

It is my feeling that every boat has a personality, and therefore should have a name. In my family a statement like, "Let's take the boat to the lake," only leads to the question, "Which one?" You see we have a sailing, rowing, and motoring dinghy and a power cruiser. We call the power cruiser, the Scribe II. We are giving the test of time to the name for our new dinghy. As soon as we settle the family dispute, it will be displayed on the hull. In the meantime, we just call it the dinghy.

Naturally Wild



story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

Yellow-Rumped Warbler
(Dendroicha coronata)

Normally when we think of warblers, we may think of them as those colorful, dainty, little wisps of birds associated with warmer temperatures. Many migrate through Virginia in spring and fall. Some breed in Virginia, and there are four species of warblers that winter here. One species in particular is surprisingly cold hardy. The yellow-rumped warbler, identified in older bird books as the myrtle warbler, and affectionately called "butterbutts" by birdwatchers, winters over much of the southern portion of eastern United States, and in Virginia especially along coastal and tidewater regions.

It differs from other warblers in this way as well as its ability to live off of a variety of wild berries and seeds when no insects are available, and it can live in the shrubs and hedgerows of open country as well as in woodlands. In Virginia, it is found in large numbers along the coast and the Eastern Shore in the wax myrtle, bayberry, sea oats, and wild cherry stands, during the cold months. It will often "dilly-dally" in its northern breeding grounds well into the cold weather before moving south, and begins to show up in Virginia in force in October.

Its yellow rump patch best identifies the yellow-rumped warbler. Its spring plumage is more colorful, showing a yellow crown patch and a yellow patch on either side of its breast. Its bluish-gray streaked upperparts of spring become grayish-brown in winter. Its breast and side are streaked.

In spring, they are the earliest of migrating warblers, moving north as early as late-February. At this time they may snack at your suet feeder, or on small seeds or seed remnants dropped by other birds. They will also visit the sap wells drilled by the yellow-bellied sapsucker. Their spring song is a soft, high-pitched, "swee-swee-swee." All you'll hear from them in winter is a harsh, metallic, "tchup!"

Yellow-rumps breed across the northern tier of states from New England to northern Minnesota, and up into Canada. The nest, built mainly in conifers, is constructed with small twigs, grasses, plant fibers, and hair, and lined with feathers, another behavior unique among wood warblers. Four or five eggs hatch in about two weeks. The young are normally fledged by the end of June and by August they are in their plumage.

They prefer insects, which they catch in flycatcher fashion. In addition to gnats, flies, and other flying insects, it also eats grubs, caterpillars, small beetles, borers, ants, and other. It also comes to the ground to feed, another fairly unique habit of its clan. When insects are scarce, particularly in winter, they turn to the berries of cedar, poison ivy, bayberry, wax myrtle, and other small wild fruits.

On one January day while walking though stands of wax myrtle and bayberry, I kept hearing a soft "snapping" and "crackling" sound. After some investigation I finally pinpointed the sound. It was emanating from yellow-rumps picking the dried berries of bayberry, which gave a little snapping sound when they did. The dozens of feeding warblers produced a faint but constant crackling sound!

At this time of the year they commonly flock up with chickadees, titmice, juncos, and white-throated sparrows when found inland in the brushy hedgerows and woodlands edges. As many as a half dozen yellow-rumps have spent a good part of winter at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' "Backyard on Broad" garden and the surrounding brushy hedgerows and tree-lined creek. □

Looking for a great way to connect with your family?

Fishing and boating are great ways to connect, and participating in a fishing and boating activity is a great way to do it. It's a wonderful opportunity for families to have fun, create new memories, and spend time together. Celebrate with us and discover just how much fun fishing and boating can be when you do it together.

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